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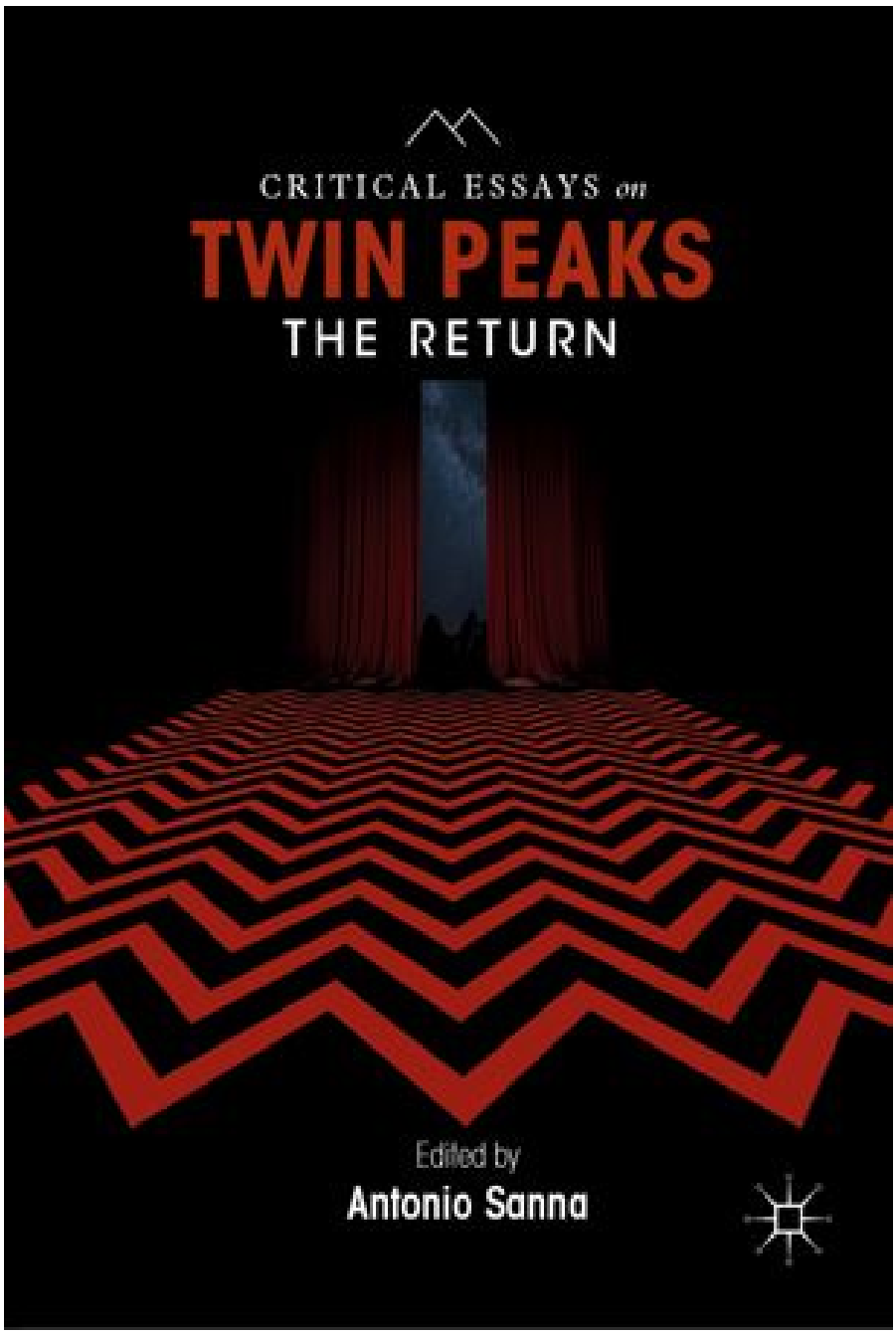

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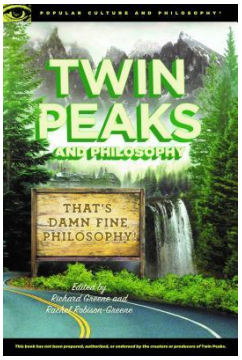

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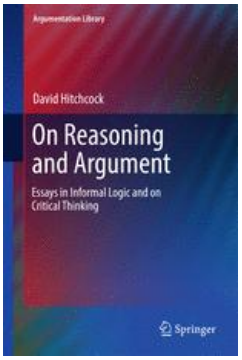

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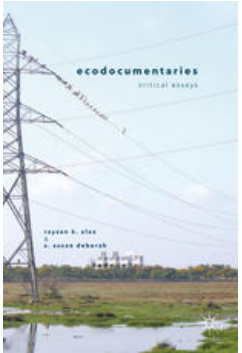

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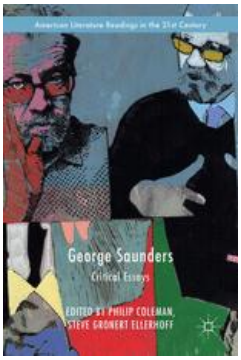

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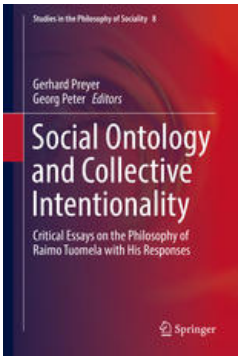

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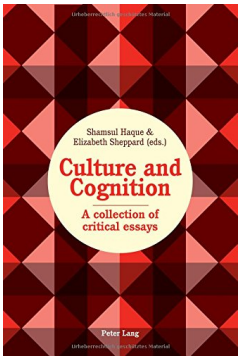

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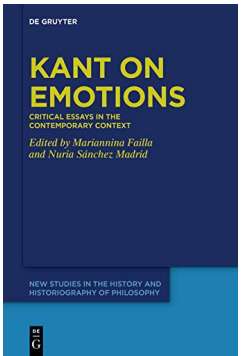

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TWIN PEAKS

THE RETURN

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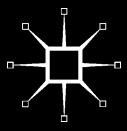

Critical Essays on *Twin Peaks: The Return*

Antonio Sanna
Editor

Critical Essays on *Twin Peaks: The Return*

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To all those avid fans who have grown up with
Twin Peaks *in their hearts and souls*

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Ryan Coogan is a Ph.D. student at Liverpool John Moores University, UK. His current research examines work by twentieth-century female poets working in the Modernist tradition whose poetics are realized and honed through their interaction with and creation of objects. In particular, his thesis examines key poems, art works, inventions and performances by Mina Loy, Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, Susan Howe, Joan Retallack, and Paula Claire.

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T. Kyle King a trusts and estates lawyer practicing in the Atlanta, USA area, appeared as a weekly contributor on *Wrapped in Podcast* to discuss *Twin Peaks: The Return*. He is the author of *Fighting Like Cats and Dogs* (2013), and his articles previously have appeared in *Wrapped in Plastic*, the *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, and *The Georgia Bar Journal*.

Elizabeth Lowry received her Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition from Arizona State University, USA, where she now holds a Lecturer position in the same. Her research interests include Western esotericism, Religious rhetorics, and Gender Studies. She is the author of *Invisible Hosts: Performing the Nineteenth Century Spirit Medium's Autobiography* (2017) and *The Seybert Report: Rhetoric, Rationale, and the Problem of Psi Research* (Palgrave, 2017).

Rupert Loydell is a Senior Lecturer in English and Creative Writing at Falmouth University, UK. He is also a poet, the editor of *Stride*, and a contributing editor for *International Times*. He has written and

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Donald McCarthy is a writer and teacher from New York, USA. He has had essays appear in *Approaching Twin Peaks: Critical Thoughts on the Original Series* and *The Man in the High Castle and Philosophy*, and has had fiction appear with *Plots with Guns* and *Weirdbook*. A complete list of his works can be found at www.donaldmccarthy.com.

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Antonio Sanna completed his Ph.D. at the University of Westminster, UK in 2008. He has published more than seventy essays and reviews in international journals, including also the volumes *Acts of Memory: The Victorian and Beyond* (2010), *The Culture and Philosophy of Ridley Scott* (2013), and *The Zombie Renaissance in Popular Culture* (2015). He is co-editor (with Adam Barkman) of *A Critical Companion to Tim Burton* (2017) and *A Critical Companion to James Cameron* (2018), and editor of *Pirates in History and Popular Culture* (2018). Currently, Antonio teaches English literature in Sassari, Italy.

David Sweeney is a Lecturer in Design History and Theory at the Glasgow School of Art, UK specializing in popular culture. He has published articles and book chapters and presented conference papers on a wide range of topics including Mike Leigh and Britpop, Marvel comics and movies, time travel cinema, digital comics, and the Folk Horror Revival. David is currently researching emerging virtual and augmented reality technology and developing his concept of 'incursive narratives.'

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PART I

The Real World: History, Technology and Fandom

CHAPTER 1

Entering the World of *Twin Peaks*

Antonio Sanna

In the September 1989 issue of *Conisseur* magazine, *Twin Peaks* was prophetically defined as 'The Series That Will Change TV Forever' (qtd. in Lim 2015, p. 91). Previously TV series were mainly family, doctor, law and detective shows. *Twin Peaks* introduced audiences to unpredictable plotlines and unconventional characters, and endowed the story with subversive themes (such as incest and deformity), eerie environments and settings (often characterized by the dichotomy of nature and society) and humorous sequences alternated with moments of horror. The success of the program and its cult following has been instrumental, as many critics have pointed out, to the advent of the present 'Golden-Age of Television.' Contemporary series such as the *X-Files* (1993–2002, 2016–), *American Gothic* (1995–1996), *Millennium* (1996–1999), *Queer as Folk* (2000–2005), *Carnivale* (2003–2005), *The L Word* (2004–2009), *Lost* (2004–2010), *Rome* (2005–2007), *Dexter* (2006–2013), *True Blood* (2008–2014), *The Vampire Diaries* (2009–), *American Horror Story* (2011–), *Game of Thrones* (2011–) and *Hannibal* (2013–2015) are all indebted to *Twin Peaks* in terms of both their contents and visual aesthetics (Angelini and Booy 2010, pp. 23–24; Clark 2013, pp. 9–12; Jowett and Abbott 2013, p. 46; Wheatley 2006, p. 162).

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Twin Peaks was born out of the combined efforts of David Lynch and Mark Frost. Lynch had previously directed the films *Eraserhead* (1977), *The Elephant Man* (1980), *Dune* (1984) and *Blue Velvet* (1986) and had already gained the reputation of an eccentric artist. Indeed, all of his films (especially, those released after the TV series) are generally characterized by extreme, provocative and brutal images, incidental dialogue, the juxtaposition of the mundane with the macabre and the bizarre, the use of horror techniques and the denaturalization of the parameters of time and space (Braziel 2004, p. 108). Typical thematic concerns of Lynch's oeuvre include: the lack of order in an individual's life and psyche, the exploration of identity crises and the effects of trauma and the uncanny. Such themes are often expressed through nonrepresentational images and encrypted narratives which do not necessarily present a clear, explanatory and final resolution or a linear narrative following Hollywood's conventional criteria. On the other hand, Mark Frost was an expert screenwriter, who had previously worked on TV on shows such as *Hill Street Blues* (1981–1987). His typical cerebral storytelling coupled with the quixotic visionary work of Lynch thus offered an opportunity for the creation of a unique product which would immediately capture the attention and interest of millions and created a resilient fan community that still thrives in the present day (Dukes 2014, p. 7).

The story of *Twin Peaks* is focused on FBI Special Agent Dale Cooper's (Kyle MacLachlan) investigation on the murder of seventeen-year-old homecoming queen Laura Palmer (Sheryl Lee). The murder upsets the entire community of Twin Peaks, a small town in Northwest America, near the border with Canada. The local community is formed by mundane and simple as much as mysterious and bizarre characters (interpreted by a cast of convincing actors and actresses ranging in age from teenagers to elderly professionals), who all live secret, double lives. The righteous, honorable and self-confident Cooper is 'the moral compass of the series and the ideal outsider to engage with the dark secrets' (Dukes 2014, p. 68) of Twin Peaks. During his investigation, which blends deductive reasoning with intuitions and inspiration from dreams, he discovers that the woods around the town are inhabited by a timeless evil that manifests its presence through the actions of evil spirits. One of the spirits, called BOB (Frank Silva), has taken possession of Laura's father, Leland (Ray Wise), and has (allegedly) forced him to abuse and kill his own daughter. Some of the defining characteristics of the series are established in the pilot, such as the nostalgic references to the fifties

and the repetition of the frames of certain artifacts, urban locations and natural landscapes (the exteriors of the town's most important buildings, the oscillating ceiling fan in the Palmers's house, the pine branches fluttering in the wind and the suspended traffic light). Tragedy and absurdist comedy are frequently juxtaposed. Simultaneously, the mundane is invaded by the ominous and the supernatural. The narrative thus exemplifies the concept of the fantastic elaborated by Tzvetan Todorov, as Diane Stevenson has argued (1995, p. 70), because it alternates its events between the realms of the ordinary and the supernatural.

The series premiered on April 8, 1990 on the American Broadcasting Company (ABC). The pilot was watched by over 34 million viewers and a first season of the show was instantly confirmed. Season One, which aired from 12 April 1990 to 23 May 1990, consisted of eight episodes (including the pilot) and concluded with a series of cliffhangers that left the fates of many characters in suspense. Due to its quirky characters, quotable dialogue and enticing plotlines, *Twin Peaks* was an instant success, and the catchphrase 'Who killed Laura Palmer?' has reverberated ever since. During the four-month hiatus between the first two seasons, the public curiosity and interest in the show was further augmented by the production of some merchandise, including the publication of *The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer* and *'Diane …' The Twin Peaks Tapes of Agent Cooper* (both 1990). Laura's diary, written by Jennifer Chamber Lynch (daughter of the director), chronicles the girl's painful history of abuse since she was twelve, her dark dreams, her slow descent into darkness and her '*two very different lives*' (1992, p. 78) as a perfect daughter and a cocaine-addict prostitute. The diary also contains several poems that express clearly Laura's silent requests for help ('When I call out / No one can hear me / When I whisper, he thinks the message / Is for him only' [Lynch 1992, p. 14]). Cooper's tapes, written by Scott Frost and recorded by actor Kyle MacLachlan, provided fans of the program with a glimpse on the FBI agent's past and his intimate relationship with Diane, the off-camera secretary he confides his thoughts to via a tape recorder. Such a backstory was further elaborated upon in Scott Frost's book *The Autobiography of F.B.I. Special Agent Dale Cooper: My Life, My Tapes* (1991)—a collection of transcripts from the agent's audio tapes that traces the character's education and his love for the FBI—and was paired to Lynch,' Frost' and Richard Saul Wurman's *Welcome to Twin Peaks: An Access Guide to the Town* (1991)—a volume on the local history and touristic attractions of the fictional town which parodies real guidebooks.

multidimensional nature of Lynch and Frost's series as a reproduction of what we experience in life, as a story of memory, selfhood, attachment to selfhood and perpetual confusion. Potter and Cobb then draw many parallels between the series' depiction of the world of dreams and its representation of reality. Andrew T. Burt's chapter studies the use of sound as a critical indicator in determining shifts in tone, signifying changes in the narrative, or signaling a Lynchian aside that enhances the mood. Burt argues that sound informs all aspects of Lynch's universe, but is integral to scenes in which characters make discoveries or transitions, whether accompanied by electricity or machinery or going through the transitory motions of everyday life. The fifth chapter, by Kingsley Marshall and Rupert Loydell, pays attention to the predominantly dialogue-free Part 8 of the series in order to explore how Lynch makes use of intricate sound design, score, existing source music and music performed within the diegesis in order to complete his intricate visuals. The chapter explores how the episode, and the series as a whole, makes intertextual connections to conventional and experimental film form in addition to extending upon established Lynchian worlds, and how manipulation of sounds within the series lends an otherworldly quality to the image. The last section of the book concludes with a chapter by David Sweeney, which demonstrates that the various acts performing at the Bang Bang Bar—a mixture of fifties and eighties influenced musicians—makes perfect *real world* sense in the context of what music critic Simon Reynolds has termed 'retromania': pop culture's fascination with, and constant referencing of, its past. In the context of *Twin Peaks*, Sweeney explains, 'retro' music in some cases is a perfect pastiche of its sources as to seem to belong authentically to the past, but it also functions as an element of *estrangement*.

The diversity of approaches used by the contributors and the variety of subjects they consider demonstrate the complexity of *Twin Peaks: The Return* as an inexhaustible source of appeal and a stimulating generator of endless theoretical interpretations. A timely assessment of the critical importance of the program requires both an interdisciplinary perspective and the fusion of different intellectual approaches across genres. The chapters in the volume indicate a collective awareness of the TV series as a fundamental milestone in contemporary culture, a more-than-welcome return to a program that has changed TV and, through its aesthetic and narrative inventiveness in Season Three, can further change the direction and style of present and future TV series.

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The German pictures.

(See page 139.)

LITTLE SUNSHINE'S HOLIDAY

A PICTURE FROM LIFE

BY

MISS MULOCK

Illustrated by

ETHELDRED B. BARRY

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DEDICATED TO

Little Sunshine's Little Friends

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LITTLE SUNSHINE’S HOLIDAY.

CHAPTER I.

WHILE writing this title, I paused, considering whether the little girl to whom it refers would not say of it, as she sometimes does of other things, “You make a mistake.” For she is such a very accurate little person. She cannot bear the slightest alteration of a fact. In herself and in other people she must have the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. For instance, one day, overhearing her mamma say, “I had my shawl with me,” she whispered, “No, mamma, not your shawl; it was your waterproof.”

Therefore, I am sure she would wish me to explain at once that “Little Sunshine” is not her real name, but a pet name, given because she is such a sunshiny child; and that her “holiday” was not so much hers—seeing she was then not three years old, and every day was a holiday—as her papa’s and mamma’s, who are very busy people, and who took her with them on one of their rare absences from home. They felt they could not do without her merry laugh, her little pattering feet, and her pretty curls,—even for a month. And so she got a “holiday” too, though it was quite unearned: as she has never been to school, and her education has gone no farther than a crooked *S*, a round *O*, an *M* for mamma, and a *D* for—but this is telling.

Of course Little Sunshine has a Christian name and surname, like other little girls, but I do not choose to give them. She has neither brother nor sister, and says “she doesn’t want any,—she had rather play with papa and mamma.” She is not exactly a pretty child, but she has very pretty yellow curls, and is rather proud of “my curls.” She has only lately begun to say “I” and “my,” generally speaking of herself, baby-fashion, in the third person,—as “Sunny likes that,” “Sunny did so-and-so,” etc. She always tells everything she has done, and everything she is going to do. If she has come to any trouble—broken a teacup, for instance—and her mamma says, “Oh, I am so sorry! Who did that?” Little Sunshine will creep up, hanging

her head and blushing, “Sunny did it; she won’t ever do it again.” But the idea of denying it would never come into her little head. Everybody has always told the exact truth to her, and so she tells the truth to everybody, and has no notion of there being such a thing as falsehood in the world.

Still, this little girl is not a perfect character. She sometimes flies into a passion, and says, “I won’t,” in a very silly way,—it is always so silly to be naughty. And sometimes she feels thoroughly naughty,—as we all do occasionally,—and then she says, of her own accord, “Mamma, Sunny had better go into the cupboard” (her mamma’s dressing-closet). There she stays, with the door close shut, for a little while; and then comes out again smiling, “Sunny is quite good now.” She kisses mamma, and is all right. This is the only punishment she has ever had—or needed, for she never sulks, or does anything underhand or mean or mischievous; and her wildest storm of passion only lasts a few minutes. To see mamma looking sad and grave, or hear her say, “I am so sorry that my little girl is naughty,” will make the child good again immediately.

So you have a faint idea of the little person who was to be taken on this long holiday; first in a “puff-puff,” then in a boat,—which was to her a most remarkable thing, as she lives in a riverless county, and, except once crossing the Thames, had scarcely ever beheld water. Her mamma had told her, however, of all the wonderful things she was to see on her holiday, and for a week or two past she had been saying to every visitor that came to the house, “Sunny is going to Scotland. Sunny is going in a puff-puff to Scotland. And papa will take her in a boat, and she will catch a big salmon. Would you like to see Sunny catch a big salmon?” For it is the little girl’s firm conviction that to see Sunny doing anything must be the greatest possible pleasure to those about her,—as perhaps it is.

Well, the important day arrived. Her mamma was very busy, Little Sunshine helping her,—to “help mamma” being always her grand idea. The amount of work she did, in carrying her mamma’s clothes from the drawers to the portmanteau, and carrying them back again; watching her dresses being folded and laid in the trunk, then jumping in after them, smoothing and patting them down, and, lastly, sitting

upon them, cannot be told. Every now and then she looked up, “Mamma, isn’t Sunny a busy girl?”—which could not be denied.

Sunshine says good bye to the gardener & his wife

Sunshine says good-bye to the gardener & his wife.

The packing-up was such a great amusement—to herself, at least—that it was with difficulty she could be torn from it, even to get her dinner, and be dressed for her journey, part of which was to take place that day. At last she was got ready, a good while before anybody else, and then she stood and looked at herself from head to foot in a large mirror, and was very much interested in the sight. Her travelling-dress was a gray waterproof cloak, with a hood and pockets, where she could carry all sorts of things,—her gloves, a biscuit, the head of her dolly (its body had come off), and two or three pebbles, which she daily picked up in the garden, and kept to wash in her bath night and morning, “to make them clean,” for she has an extraordinary delight in things being “quite clean.” She had on a pair of new boots,—buttoned boots, the first she ever had,—and she was exceedingly proud of them, as well as of her gray felt hat, underneath which was the usual mass of curly yellow hair. She shook it from side to side like a little lion’s mane, calling out, “Mamma, look at Sunny’s curls! Such a lot of curls!”

When the carriage came to the door, she watched the luggage being put in very gravely. Then all the servants came to say good-bye to her. They were very kind servants, and very fond of Little Sunshine. Even the gardener and his wife looked quite sorry to part with her, but in her excitement and delight the little lady of course did not mind it at all.

“Good-bye! good-bye! I’m going to Scotland,” she kept saying, and kissing her hand. “Sunny’s going to Scotland in a puff-puff. But she’ll come back again, she will.”

After which kind promise, meant to cheer them up a little, she insisted on jumping into the carriage “all by her own self,”—she dearly likes doing anything “all my own self,”—and, kissing her hand once more, was driven away with her mamma and her nurse (whose name is Lizzie) to meet her papa in London.

Having been several times in a “puff-puff,” and once in London, she was not a bit frightened at the streets or the crowd. Only in the confusion at Euston Square she held very tight to her mamma’s

hand, and at last whispered, “Mamma, take her! up in you arms, up in you own arms!”—her phrase when she was almost a baby. And though she is now a big girl, who can walk, and even run, she clung tightly to her mamma’s neck, and would not be set down again until transferred to her papa, and taken by him to look at the engine.

Papa and his little girl are both very fond of engines. This was such a large one, newly painted, with its metal-work so clean and shiny, that it was quite a picture. Though sometimes it gave a snort and a puff like a live creature, Sunny was not afraid of it, but sat in her papa’s arms watching it, and then walked gravely up and down with him, holding his hand and making all sorts of remarks on the things she saw, which amused him exceedingly. She also informed him of what she was going to do,—how she should jump into the puff-puff, and then jump out again, and sleep in a cottage, in a quite new bed, where Sunny had never slept before. She chattered so fast, and was so delighted at everything about her, that the time went rapidly by; and her papa, who could not come to Scotland for a week yet, was obliged to leave her. When he kissed her, poor Little Sunshine set up a great cry.

“I don’t want you to go away. Papa! papa!” Then, bursting into one of her pathetic little furies, “I won’t let papa go away! I won’t!”

She clung to him so desperately that her little arms had fairly to be untied from round his neck, and it was at least two minutes and a half before she could be comforted.

But when the train began to move, and the carriageful of people to settle down for the journey, Sunny recovered herself, and grew interested in watching them. They were all gentlemen, and as each came in, mamma had suggested that if he objected to a child, he had better choose another carriage; but nobody did. One—who looked like the father of a family—said: “Ma’am, he must be a very selfish kind of man who does object to children,—that is, good children.” So mamma earnestly hoped that hers would be a good child.

So she was,—for a long time. There were such interesting things to see out of the window: puff-puffs without end, some moving on the